The writers of a recent report on Okinawan economy have emphasised that the combination of generally poor soils, the rapid decomposition of organic matter in a near tropical climate, and excessive leaching make the problem of fertilisation very difficult--[4] to say nothing of the trace elements.

(6) Other substances are used for fertilisers. In Matsuda the barber gathers the cuttings from the luxuriant hair of his clients and places them around his sugar cane--and recommends them highly. Acacia leaves are also used for this purpose here. Leaves and miscellaneous plants are often considered to be especially good fertilizers.

Crop rotation (rinsaku) practices differ by district. In the Hanashiro area, the sugar cane, soy bean, and sweet potato (or vegetable), sugar cane rotation is common. Rotation of paddy with another crop does not occur. Rice succeeds rice in the double cropping system here. In Matsuda, a common rotation is either (1) the sweet potato, soy beans (or grain, millet, or green peas) and the sweet potato, or (2) the soy bean, sweet potato, grain (barley or millet) rotation. Here rice is not rotated with other crops. (This however does occur in Okinawa).

Simple Rotations
Hanashiro and Nagamo

One Year

After the sweet potato harvest, the plot is planted in soybeans in the first lunar month.

The soybeans are harvested in the fifth lunar month.

Sweet potatoes follow the soybeans in the sixth lunar month

or

Vegetables alternating with the sweet potato for a year.

Two Years

Sugar cane is sown in the sixth lunar month.

Harvested two years hence, followed by ordinary beans or vegetables, again followed by cane.

4 Agricultural and economic reconstruction in the Ryukyus. A report. Agricultural mission to the Ryukyus, Nov. 1949, 46-47.

1: Glacken E-5 (1951-1952) 1953 AC7 Okinawa AC7

needs supplementation. Hence, a farmer cannot buy so much as a fisherman. A rice farmer, if he is eligible at all, cannot purchase so much as a sweet potato grower. These stores fill a genuine need. They have alleviated hardship and done much to improve the monotonous pre-war diet. In the villages, they are a concrete reminder of direct American contact. There is not a store in every village, but each village has ready access to one.

The rural blacksmith takes care of the needs of farmers and stonecutters. One such shop in Nagano serves many villages in the Oushichan area. The forge is of simple construction. The air is blown by a sort of box bellows. The operator sits down, as if he were in a row boat, and by pushing and pulling the handle (which has a T-end grip like a hand pump) moves the piston horizontally back and forth. The blacksmith repairs agricultural and stonecutting tools and makes new tools, chiefly hoes and spikes for the harrow.

There are no good inns, restaurants or tea houses in the villages. In Hinatogawa a Japanese inn of rude construction and comfort caters to parties for the entertainment of visitors who have business with local people.

Getting a haircut or a bath may involve going to another village. Like the stores, barbershops are little social centers, especially during bad weather when villagers are not working and take the opportunity to have their hair cut.

2

Mutual Loan Groups

In China and Japan, mutual loan groups have had a long history. In essence, they are groups associated for the purpose of borrowing and lending money, the capital being derived from contributions of the membership. There is an element of chance when members bid against one another or draw lots for a loan.[2]

Each member of a loan group advances an agreed upon share. The total amount is then available as a lump sum to one of them as a borrower. The borrower repays principal and interest in monthly installments. The remaining members advance the same amount each on the following month to another borrower. In this way, there is a continuous cycle of lending

2 They are known variously as mo-ai (Japanese), mu-e (Okinawan) tanomoshi and yūrei (Japanese). Groups organized on a monthly basis are tsukikiyurei or tsukimoai (Japanese), and on an annual basis as nimu-e (Okinawan), ninmo-ai (Japanese). At present there are no annual groups because of uncertainties regarding the future value of money. Now loans are normally for a 10-12 month period.

305
302 Persons of both sexes and of all ages, including infants, visit the barbershop. With boys and men, the price includes a haircut and a shave. The upper edge of the eyebrows is always shaved to make a straight line. The eye lids are also invariably shaved. The shaving of the eyebrows and eye lids of infants is commonplace. When women go to the shop to have the neck hair trimmed, the face, the eyebrows and the eye lids may also be shaved.

7

The Nature of Social Life

562 The social life of the women is severely restricted by convention. This restriction is closely tied up with the obligations of the family system and does not imply a conscious and selfish attempt by the men to keep their women at home and distanced from society. These restrictions are the result of custom in which the women acquiesce. The few discontented exceptions are women who [177] read Japanese magazines and learn of American ideas about the position of the women. But in general women accept their status. The men have a social life quite unconscious of any obligations of this sort to the women. The point was well brought out when I asked two Okinawan teachers why it was that women had so little social life and seldom went out with their husbands. They said the subject had never occurred to them.

The center of a woman's working and social life is her home. The range of a man's activities is the village and may extend to neighboring settlements. A large part of a woman's recreation is with other women. A man's social life is spent mostly with men.

[574] A woman's opportunity to spend a social evening with men comes when her husband brings guests to their home. Here she participates in the conversation, though she usually retires earlier. With older couples, the wife is most likely to greet her guests, serve them with tea, later perhaps with sake, and then unobtrusively retire.

[593] In my observation, there is a friendly relationship between husband and wife in the home. Younger wives participate frequently in conversation. Part of a woman's social life is centered around daytime activities, like taking care of the children, running an errand, carrying rice to the mill, chores which she does in the company of other women with like duties. Her working and social life blend together more than the man's. Among the very old women, day time visiting and strolling throughout the village are very common.

A husband and a wife are not often seen together in public, except on some special occasion, such as a child's birthday party, a school athletic meeting which the whole family attends, or a

2:Maretzki & Maretzki E-5 (1954-1955) 1963 AC7 Okinawa AC7
Taira

CLOTHING

Today the clothing of Taira people is predominantly Western. Until World War II some fine silk materials for dress were woven in the village, but work clothes were bought in the stores in Nago and Naha. Men and women wear simple, drab, patched, or torn clothes which are laundered frequently. Almost everybody still has a few pieces of U.S. Army fatigues which were handed out immediately after World War II; some have Japanese uniforms.

Women wear cotton skirts and blouses, men cotton trousers, rolled up to the knees for work in the fields, and shirts. During the cold months old jackets are added. Men almost always wrap towels around their heads to hold back their long hair or, as they say, to absorb perspiration. Women also cover their heads with towels during work. Most men and women wear some underclothes; both wear pants, and most women wear slips.

Young girls are more fastidious about their daily dress than older women and all men. An adolescent girl is always well covered, unlike an older married woman who may leave her blouse open to give the baby easy access to the breast. During the heat of the summer, when men take off their shirts, old women follow their example. Most married women just work in their slip and skirt during the hottest part of the summer.

On special holidays or for trips to the city, people have better clothes. Many of these are bought by both men and women from the itinerant, secondhand clothes peddler who visits Taira several times a year before the major holidays. Some old women and a few old men still wear the dark, silk kimonos of prewar days for dress, but usually women wear one-piece dresses or two-piece suits with blouses and men Western suits with white shirts and sometimes ties. Not everybody has shoes to go with special outfits. Wooden clogs are worn by both men and women, even with Western clothes, more commonly than sneakers and shoes.

Although a Western-style hairdo as pictured in magazines or seen on American women in the central part of Okinawa serves as a model to the younger Taira women, few can afford to have their hair done in the city. Sometimes a teacher or the wife of an official returns from a trip to town with a permanent wave. Most older women wear their long hair tied in a bun at the back of the head. Younger girls who have finished school wear their hair short and straight. The priestess' daughter cuts hair in a barber chair outside her house. Men go to her

for a shave; but since this happens only about once a week or less, they have a stubbly beard much of the time. Men have their hair cut infrequently. From adolescence on they prefer long and unwieldy hair, combed to one side.

Almost no women use lipstick, but a few put on rouge for special occasions. More and more of the younger women use some make-up when they travel to the city, in spite of rather rude teasing from other villagers that they look like prostitutes.

During the hot summer most people have straw sun hats which can be bought at the local store after the rainy season. They cost little and last until the end of the heat. Umbrellas are the only rain protection during wet days, since the raincoats and hats formerly made of palm thatch have almost completely disappeared.

DWELLINGS

All but two houses in Taira are postwar structures. The first postwar structures were small and hastily built of local, mostly inferior materials. In the last few years families have built more elaborate houses with several rooms, substantial walls and roofs, and made of quality Japanese hard woods, which will resist rapid deterioration. Only a few of the present houses, however, compare in size and workmanship with the large prewar farmhouses.

On the whole, housing in central Taira is inferior to outlying parts of the community and other surrounding villages. Two house types are found: the simple, temporary house or hut with two or three rooms and a kitchen, covered by a thatch roof; and the larger, more substantial house with either thatch or tile roof, four to six rooms and a kitchen.

All houses have common characteristics. They are elevated from the ground so that a 20 to 24 inch space is left underneath the floor, which is sometimes used for the storage of potatoes and firewood. The floor plan is uniform for all houses of either type (Figure 1). Living rooms, also used for sleeping, are always located in the front part of the house. A smaller room located at the right rear of the house is used as a bedroom or for sick people and parturient mothers. The kitchen is on level ground so that a step has to be taken to enter the eating corner from the kitchen. Even the simplest huts have a thin wall which separates the rear bedroom and kitchen from the front part. All outside doors are sliding panels which move in a wooden track so that the whole front of the house may be opened. A visitor can tell immediately if somebody is home and, if an informal caller, will sit on the elevated

and women. Two informants who had lived in Japan denied having ever heard of public baths with mixed bathing. Okinawans have occasionally been shocked by seeing Americans nude. Okinawans feel that not only should the lower part of the torso be covered for the sake of modesty but the upper part also should be covered, if one is out of doors, for reasons of health; the sun's rays are harmful if too strong. Modesty may even reach proportions uncommon in the West; one young man told Lebra that he does not enjoy going swimming because he believes he is too hairy. The same young man told how he and other boys, when in high school, used to peep through a crack in the bathhouse wall in order to see the women bathing on the other side, until they were chased away by the proprietor. This hardly suggests the casual attitude toward nudity reported for the Japanese. 291 834 [515] [826]

Body Ornamentation. The Okinawans seem never to have practiced any sort of body mutilation---such as the Chinese foot-binding. However, women were tattooed on the wrists and backs of the hands until early in this century. Most women over 50 have tattooed hands. There are several stories told that purport to explain the origin of the practice---that it was to prevent Okinawan women from being kidnapped, for example---but these stories are of doubtful value. The designs have names but evidently no meaning; one old woman said that they varied with the tattoo artist, who put on whatever he wanted. Tattooing was done before puberty and marriage. It may have originally been part of a puberty rite. 178 304

Many people of both sexes between the ages of 20 and 40 have elaborate gold and silver work on their teeth. In many cases the work does not consist of fillings or bridges but of thin caps put over sound teeth for purely ornamental reasons. These can be removed without harming the teeth. People are said to be having this sort of work done today, but in time the value Americans and present-day Japanese put on "natural-looking" teeth may win out over the urge to ornament the mouth. Of course there is also a great deal genuine dental work done because of tooth decay. 301 [77]

At present American values and modern Japanese values in feminine beauty are being spread by the beauty parlor. For several years the permanent wave has been popular though perhaps not well suited to Mongoloid hair. And recently a number of young women are said to have added padded brassieres to their equipment. 177 832 [305] [302] [294]

Elimination. Urination and defecation are regarded differently. Urination in public is permissible for males, if they turn away. I have seen a dignified old gentleman talking over his shoulder to a young woman while he urinated into the ditch. Women may also urinate in public, though they do so less frequently. Defecation in public is not usual; even children are scolded for it though they may occasionally do it. Feces ought to go in the proper place; one reason for using the toilet may be that the "night-soil" is used as fertilizer. 514 [863] [241]

The Okinawan term kusu is used rather more freely than its Japanese cognate, though the uses are parallel. Alone it means "feces", human or animal. It is the usual word for animal manure. In compounds it may mean 192